

# GED<sup>®</sup> EDUCATOR HANDBOOK



Everything you need to prepare  
students for the GED test



In-depth look at  
GED test content



Recommended  
teaching strategies



How to determine if  
your students are ready

Edition 5.0

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# New Educator Checklist

If you are new to teaching the GED test, here's a checklist to help you get started.

1. First, familiarize yourself with some of the basics of the test and make sure you are receiving our latest updates.
  - ✓ [Sign up for our monthly newsletter, \*In Session\*](#), to get test updates, helpful resources and program news.
  - ✓ Look through our [student study guides](#). These provide an overview of the skills being tested and include sample problems for each skill.
2. Once you know the basics, now it is time to better understand the student experience in GED.com.
  - ✓ Feel free to create your own [account in GED.com](#) so you understand what your students will go through (please list your last name as "Candidate" so we know you are an instructor).
  - ✓ Take the [free practice test](#) so you understand the format of the test and the different types of questions.
  - ✓ Finally, consider taking a [GED Ready®](#) test, the official GED practice test. This is half the length of the GED test and is highly predictive of how students will perform on the actual test.
    - Make sure you review your detailed score report. This is the report that tells students the areas they need to work on to score higher on the test.
    - Notice that they can select their study materials from the dropdown box to create a customized study plan.
3. After becoming familiar with the student journey, it's time to apply for [GED Manager](#), a free tool designed for adult educators where you can see your students' scores and score reports.
  - ✓ [Apply for access](#) via the [Educators](#) section of GED.com. Each state has different rules on who can gain access.
  - ✓ Once you get access, watch our training on how to effectively use the tool.

Explore these additional tools and resources to help you prepare your students.

### **Tutorials and scoring tools**

- Writing on the GED test
  - Watch our helpful [videos](#) on how to write a great essay on the GED test and share with your students.
  - To grade a student's GED Ready essay, use our free scoring [tool](#).
- Math
  - [Calculator tutorial](#)
  - [Calculator reference guide](#) and [formula sheet](#)

### **How To Guides**

- Testing Guidance for Educators
- Transcript and Diploma Guidance for GED Credentialing

### **More information on the GED test and CCRS content**

- [Performance Level Descriptors](#) — These are the skills that are measured on the GED test.
- [Assessment Guide for Educators](#) — An in-depth guide to the GED test.
- [High Impact Indicators](#) — Not all skills are created equal! Improving certain skills can help students improve in other areas. These resources provide detailed guidance on how you can best help improve student performance.
- [College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education from OCTAE](#)

### **Professional Development**

For free professional development take a look at our webinar training series, [Tuesdays for Teachers](#). There are over 30 trainings you can view.

# Chapter 1: The GED Test – A Closer Look

The GED test was built from the ground up to provide students a test that measures the skills they need to succeed. The test focuses on the foundational knowledge and skills needed for college and career readiness; colleges and employers can be confident that students who pass the GED test have the skills to excel on the job or in the classroom.

Keep reading to learn more about the GED test, including:

- GED test basics
- GED test benefits
- What's on the Reasoning Through Language Arts test
- What's on the Mathematical Reasoning test
- What's on the Science test
- What's on the Social Studies test

## GED test basics

- 4 test subjects: Reasoning Through Language Arts (RLA), Mathematical Reasoning, Science, and Social Studies
- Students must score at least 145 in all 4 test subjects to earn their GED credential
- Students don't have to take all 4 tests at once
- Delivered on computer
- Available in both English and Spanish
- 1 Extended Response question on the RLA test
- Offers three passing levels:
  - GED Passing Score (score of 145-164)
  - GED College Ready (score of 165-174)
  - GED College Ready + Credit (score of 175-200)
- Passing levels are based on the performance of high school graduates who took the test as part of the standardization and norming study
- Scores reported in the Enhanced Score Report, available in student's GED account

## GED test benefits

- Accommodations are free of charge, such as extra time and a paper test option
- Pay-as-you-go pricing allows students to pay for each test subject as they take it in order to spread out the cost of the entire test
- Scores are available within one day of taking the test
- 100% refund if a test is canceled or rescheduled at least 24 hours before the appointment time
- Most students get \$20 off of two retakes per subject through the discounted retake program\*

## What's on the Reasoning Through Language Arts (RLA) test

- 150 minutes (including a 10-minute break)
- Includes multiple choice, drop-down, and a variety of technology-enhanced items
- Includes one 45-minute extended response (essay)
- Stimulus passages are 75% informational, 25% literary
- Passages are from 400 to 900 words long; they range in complexity, including text at the college and career readiness level
- Vocabulary focuses on words that appear frequently in a wide variety of disciplines
- Measures the student's:
  - Ability to read closely, write clearly, edit and understand written English
  - Ability to understand, interpret, and answer questions based on text
  - Ability to use evidence to support an argument
  - Understanding of basic English skills at a level needed to succeed in college or a job

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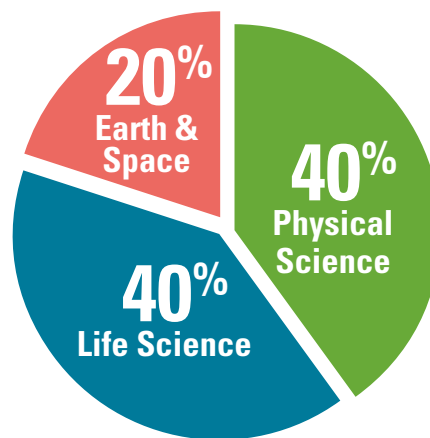
\* Through the [Discounted Retake Program](#), every candidate is eligible for two discounted retakes for a failed attempt on a GED test subject. These discounted retakes are valid for twelve months after the initial subject area test attempt. For each discounted retake, GED Testing Service waives all testing fees, so the only costs to the student are any applicable state or testing center fees. This applies to U.S. test takers only. International students are not eligible.

## What's on the Mathematical Reasoning test

- 115 minutes
- 2 parts
  - No calculator allowed on the first section
  - Students may use a TI-30XS calculator or the built-in virtual calculator for the remaining questions\*
- Includes multiple choice, drop-down, and a variety of technology-enhanced items
- A calculator guide and a math formula sheet are provided in the testing center and on the screen
- Measures the student's:
  - Algebraic problem-solving abilities (55%)
  - Quantitative problem-solving abilities (45%)

## What's on the Science test

- 90 minutes
- No break
- Includes multiple choice, drop-down, and a variety of technology-enhanced items
- Students may use a TI-30XS calculator or the built-in virtual calculator\*
- Measures the student's scientific reasoning skills in three areas:
  - Reading and writing in science (30%)
  - Science concepts (40%)
  - Mathematical reasoning in science (30%)
- These skills apply to real world situations in the context of the three [science content topics](#)

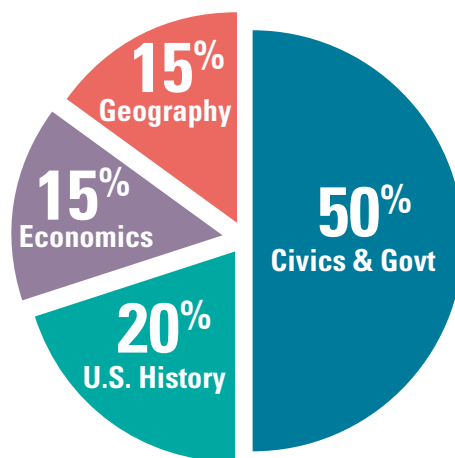


\* International students may only use the virtual calculator.



## What's on the Social Studies test

- 70 minutes
- No break
- Includes multiple choice, drop-down, and a variety of technology-enhanced items
- Students may use a TI-30XS calculator or the built-in virtual calculator\*
- Measures the student's reasoning skills in three areas:
  - Reading and writing in Social Studies (33%)
  - Social Studies concepts (33%)
  - Mathematical reasoning in Social Studies (33%)
- These skills are applied to real world situations in the context of the [four content topics](#)



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\* International students may only use the virtual calculator.

## Chapter 2: What Scores Look Like

Students who take the GED test will get their test scores in their GED.com accounts. All students receive an Enhanced Score Report under the “My Scores” section that includes four parts:

- My Scores
- How I Can Score Higher (Personal Study Plan)
- What My Score Means
- My Written Answers

### My Scores

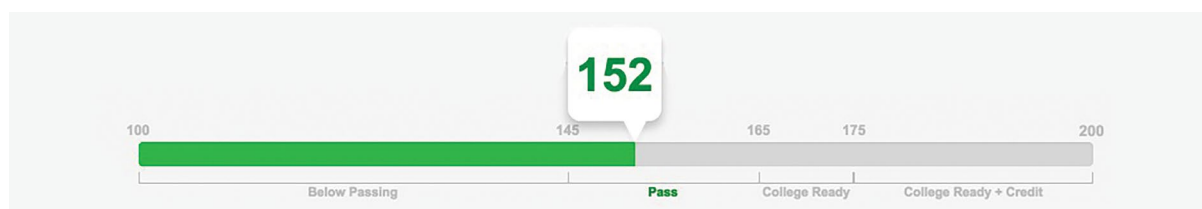
This section looks slightly different depending on whether the score is for the GED test or the [GED Ready practice test](#) because they have different score levels. The GED test score levels are: \*

- **Below Passing (score of 100 – 144)** — Students who earned a below passing score did not demonstrate the skills graduating high school seniors need to earn their high school diploma.
- **GED Passing Score (score of 145 – 164)** — Students who earned the GED Passing Score demonstrated the skills that graduating high school seniors need to earn their diploma.
- **GED College Ready (score of 165 – 174)** — Students who earned the GED College Ready score demonstrated the skills that graduating high school seniors need to earn their diploma at a level indicating college and career readiness.
- **GED College Ready + Credit (score of 175 – 200)** — The highest score possible on the GED test. Students who earned the GED College Ready + Credit score not only demonstrated the skills that graduating high school seniors need to earn their diploma at a level indicating college and career readiness, but they may be eligible for up to 10 college credit hours to apply to their program of study (3 credits for math, 3 credits for science, 3 credits for social studies, 1 credit for language arts).

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\* More information about the GED Ready score levels is available in Chapter 4.

## GED Test Scores



## How I Can Score Higher (Personal Study Plan)

Students who didn't pass or who want to try for a higher score should use the personal study plan in the score report. The recommendations are based on their unique performance on each GED test.

- See what skills they need to work on to score higher
- Select their favorite study materials to get a personal study plan with pages and chapters to review

## What My Score Means

This section describes all the skills that the student successfully demonstrated on the test. These are strengths to build on in future learning and describe what the student knows and can do based on their GED test results.

## My Written Answers

This section displays different information on students' responses depending on whether the score report is for the GED test or [GED Ready practice test](#).\*

- **GED test** — Shows the students' scores for their responses and the skills they need to work on to score higher on the RLA test.
- **GED Ready practice test** — Displays the student's written responses to extended response. Educators can use the [constructed response scoring tools](#) to give test-takers feedback on their responses.

\* More information about the GED Ready score report is available in Chapter 4.

## Chapter 3:

# Strategies for Teaching the Test

Your students rely on you to teach them the skills and knowledge they need to pass the GED test. Here are some teaching strategies to help your students develop those skills as they prepare for the test:

- Use [Performance Level Descriptors](#)
- Focus on the [skills](#) that have the biggest impact
- Prepare your students with [test-day tools](#)
- Help students write high-scoring extended responses
- Share the [basic rules](#) for writing an extended response
- [Give students feedback](#) on their GED Ready constructed responses
- Help organize math problems
- Watch GED Testing Service [webinars](#)

## Use Performance Level Descriptors

The Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs) explain the skills students must demonstrate to score in each of the three possible performance levels on the GED test and the GED Ready practice test. Here are some helpful tips for using the PLDs in your classroom to prepare your students for the test:

**Tip 1: Use PLDs to assess your student's current skill level**

- Identify where to focus in order to develop the skills needed to move to the next performance level

**Tip 2: Use PLDs to determine when your students are ready to test**

- Determine if a student should take the GED Ready practice test or the GED test
- Use with the Enhanced Score Report's personal study plan to develop student skills

**Tip 3: Use PLDs to shape learning activities**

- Set learning objectives in your classroom based on the PLDs
- Determine if you need to adjust how you're approaching the content
- Work one-on-one with students to help develop necessary skills

**Tip 4: Use PLDs to add perspective to lesson plans**

- Determine your students' levels of preparedness and create lesson plans accordingly
- Identify the gaps in your students' skills and develop focused lesson plans to address those gaps

## Focus on the skills that have the biggest impact

Make the most of instructional time with your students by focusing on the skills that will have the biggest impact on their GED test success.

*While all the indicators listed in the GED Assessment Target indicators are essential for test-taker success, it may be useful for educators to highlight the skills from the [High Impact Indicators](#) in their instruction.*

Be sure to also look at the [Relationships Between the High Impact Indicators and Other Indicators](#). This tool shows the relationships between the High Impact Indicators and other indicators covered on the GED test. Use this resource to maximize the effectiveness of your teaching lessons by covering skill sets for multiple test subjects at the same time!

## Prepare your students with test-day tools

It's just as important for students to know how to use the tools available to them during the test. Use these tools in your classrooms so they are prepared on test day.

### Five Tools To Make Sure Students See Before Test Day

- The [Computer-Based Testing Tutorial](#) is a hands-on tutorial that shows students what the computer-based test will look like and walks them through the test's functionality and features. Every student should complete the tutorial before taking the GED test in order to know how to use the test interface and know what to expect on test day.
- [Extended Response Answer Guidelines](#) include recommendations for students when crafting their RLA extended response and the criteria that are used in scoring the response.
- [Calculator Reference Sheet](#) features instructions for using the on-screen TI-30XS calculator allowed on the Mathematical Reasoning, Social Studies, and Science tests.
- [Math Formula Sheet and Explanations](#) offers a list of formulas students can reference when taking the test.
- [Sample Erasable Note Boards](#) are available so students can practice with these tools for test day. You can order these for your classroom through [GED PrintHub](#).

## Help students write high-scoring RLA extended responses

During the scoring process, some items are weighted more heavily than others. The extended response item makes up about 20% of the student's score. We recommend that all students answer this item. There are no score deductions for incorrect answers. Make sure your students are prepared to craft fully developed responses. Use the [Sample Extended Response Passages and Prompts for Classroom Practice](#) to gauge your students' writing skills and give them feedback for improvement.

Use these **Steps for Drafting an Extended Response** to guide your students through each stage of this process.

### Steps for Drafting an Extended Response

1. Read the passage and question.
2. Unpack the prompt (identify key words including the verbs and action required).
3. Rewrite the question and turn the question into a thesis statement.
4. Collect relevant details from the passage.
5. Organize details into a logical order. Use a graphic organizer if that helps.
6. Draft an answer.
7. Re-read and edit/revise the answer making sure all parts of the question are answered.

## Share the basic rules for writing the RLA extended response

Simply attempting a written response on the RLA test subject doesn't mean a student will earn points. Responses must meet the minimum scoring criteria, which you can find in the [Extended Response Resource Guide for Adult Educators](#). Also, make sure your students follow these basic but important rules so they'll maximize the points they earn on their responses:

- 1. Students need to explain why the evidence they're quoting supports their argument.** Quotes should be used sparingly; most of their response should be their own words.
- 2. Develop 2-3 main ideas.** Students should focus on a few main points that they fully develop with evidence and support.
- 3. Write a complete essay.** Students should aim to write 4-7 paragraphs containing 3-7 sentences each.
- 4. Proofread.** Students should spend the last 4-5 minutes proofreading their response, especially checking for grammar issues. Spelling is not scored as long as the words attempted are understandable. Since this is a timed task we accept "on-demand draft writing" but students should check for the following:
  - Ensure varied sentence structure
  - Ensure correct subject-verb agreement
  - Correct use of transitions
  - Eliminate wordiness or awkwardness
  - Proper capitalization
  - Eliminate run on sentences, sentence fragments
  - Proper use of apostrophes
  - Correct punctuation
  - Ensure correct homophone usage (e.g., your vs. you're)
  - Ensure proper word order

Here are more constructed response tools to use in your classroom:

- [Sample Lesson Plan & Instructional Plan](#)
- [Websites and Resources](#)



## Give students feedback on their GED Ready constructed responses

The constructed response items on the GED Ready practice test for RLA are just like the items that are on the GED test. **Since the GED Ready practice test doesn't score the constructed responses, your students are counting on you for feedback.**

To give your students feedback on their constructed responses:

1. Have students take the GED Ready practice test
2. Once they've finished, ask them to print out their score report. This will include their written responses.

Use these constructed response tools to help you score students' responses:

- **[GED Ready Practice Test Extended Response Prompts and Source Texts](#)** show the question students responded to and the text or data they based their response on.
- **[Extended Response Resource Guide for Adult Educators](#)** give sample responses for GED Ready practice test questions at each possible score level. They also explain why each response received the score it did, so you can understand what to look for in each response. Two guides (with sample responses from two different extended response prompts) are available for the RLA test.
- **[The Extended Response Scoring Tool](#)** is a hands-on resource to use when scoring a constructed response. The tool allows you to score a response on each of the dimensions and subdimensions. The tool automatically calculates a total for each trait based on your evaluation.

## Help organize math problems

Help students translate mathematical questions into steps that help them solve the problem using the Math Graphic Organizer. Use this organizer in the classroom to show students how to break down the problem and organize available information.

Here are more math tools to use in your classroom:

- [Math Graphic Organizer](#)
- [Math Formula Sheet & Explanation](#)
- [Calculator Reference Sheet](#)
- [More Math Tools: Websites and Resources](#)
- [Math Word Problem Translation Guide](#)

## Watch GED Testing Service webinars

You'll find more helpful information to use in the classroom in our [Tuesdays for Teachers](#) webinars. Watch the webinar archive and keep an eye out for new webinars, added monthly.

Webinars are free and available on-demand. Webinars will include:

- Teaching strategies to help shape your instruction
- Ideas for classroom projects
- Handouts and worksheets to share with students
- The latest news and updates about the GED test

## Chapter 4:

# See If Your Students Are Ready

The best way to find out if your students are ready for the real test is to give them the [GED Ready®](#) official practice test. The GED Ready is the only practice test that tells if a student is likely to pass the GED test.

Keep reading to learn more about:

- How the GED Ready practice test predicts GED test performance
- What GED Ready scores mean
- How to use the personal study plan
- What to do if a student doesn't pass

### How GED Ready predicts test performance

Unlike other practice tests, GED Ready was designed to predict whether a student can pass the operational GED test. It went through the same standardization and norming process as the operational test, so students who receive a "Likely to Pass" score should be considered prepared and encouraged to take the operational test.

**GED Ready practice test questions are at the same level of difficulty as questions on the operational test, so it really does predict success on the operational GED test!**

*"We've found that our students' GED Ready results are within a point or two of the score they receive on the actual test. It's a really good predictability tool and we're confident that when a student takes GED Ready, they'll earn a similar score on the real GED test."*

— Raymond Haddix, Simpson County Adult Education, Franklin, KY

**Note:** Even though the GED Ready doesn't score constructed responses, it can still tell if a student is ready to test! *Each GED Ready practice test score considers how a student would typically score on a constructed response based on how they did on the rest of the test.*

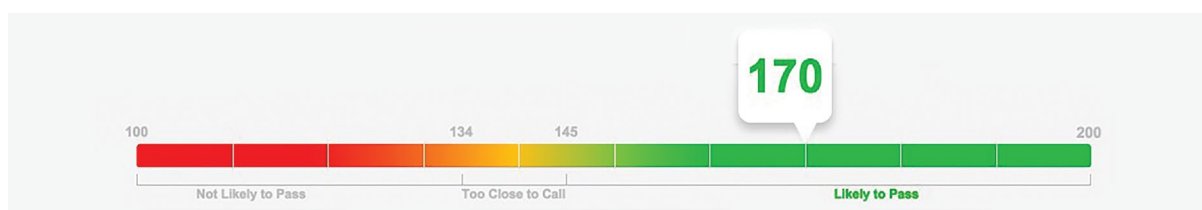
## What GED Ready practice test scores mean

Once students take GED Ready, they'll receive their Enhanced Score Report after they log into their [GED.com](https://GED.com) account. Score reports show their test score, the skills they need to work on, what they did well on, and their constructed response, if applicable.

Scores fall into one of three categories: Likely to Pass, Too Close to Call, and Not Likely to Pass.

- **Likely to Pass (145-200)** — If your students score Likely to Pass, they should take that GED subject test as soon as possible. Score predictions are valid for 60 days; make sure they test while the prediction is still valid.
- **Too Close to Call (134-144)** — If your students score Too Close to Call, use the Enhanced Score Report to see which skills they need to improve before they take the operational test. Depending on their score, they may want to take the GED Ready practice test again before taking the GED test.
- **Not Likely to Pass (100-133)** — If your students score Not Likely to Pass, use the Enhanced Score Report to see which skills they need to improve before they take the operational test. Have students take the GED Ready again to make sure they're confident to pass.

### GED Ready Test Practice Test Scores



## How to use the personal study plan

Students get a personal study plan in their Enhanced Score Report after they take the GED Ready. As an educator, you can use this plan to identify the skills and pages to work on in class. You can also use the [constructed response scoring tools](#) to give students feedback on their GED Ready RLA Extended Response questions.

To make the most of the Enhanced Score Report's study plan in your classroom:

1. Have students log into their GED.com account and view their score report.
2. Ask students to select the study materials used in class from the drop-down menu to get the recommendations specific to your classroom materials.
3. Ask students to print their report with the recommendations and personal study plan.

Start reviewing the recommended materials in your class. It's that simple!

## What to do if a student doesn't pass

With the GED program, students who don't pass the GED test have more tools than ever to help them succeed on their next try! When students need to retake a GED test subject:

1. Use the Enhanced Score Report's study plan to help focus their studying on exactly what they need to improve.
2. Give students the GED Ready practice test before taking the test again.
3. Once they're ready, have students schedule their retake in their GED.com account.\*

To download a digital copy of this handbook and to access all of the tools and resources mentioned, go to [GED.com/educator\\_handbook](https://GED.com/educator_handbook).

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\* Through the [Discounted Retake Program](#), every candidate is eligible for two discounted retakes for a failed attempt on a GED test subject. These discounted retakes are valid for twelve months after the initial subject area test attempt. For each discounted retake, GED Testing Service waives all testing fees, so the only costs to the student are any applicable state or testing center fees. This applies to U.S. test takers only. International students are not eligible.

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